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State of Georgia - Radio Frequency Coordination and License Management

The radio frequency spectrum is a finite resource of specific frequencies that must be utilized by all State, county and local government entities. As more and more governmental agencies request and are assigned to available frequencies, it is imperative that the State's public safety frequency needs are met and those current radio systems are maintained free of interference. This function is performed by the State frequency coordinator, located in the Georgia Technology Authority (GTA), Telecommunications Strategies. (See address below.)

In compliance with the *Public Safety Radio Services Act of 1975*, the State frequency coordinator is responsible for the processing, through the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), of radio frequency license applications for State agencies and local governments. The FCC has delegated the authority for handling this function on its behalf to the Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials Inc. (APCO), an international association of government telecommunications professionals. The Georgia Technology Authority (GTA) is a member of APCO, and performs the frequency coordination function through that organization. Frequencies from the Highway Maintenance Radio Service are coordinated through the American Association of Highway Transportation Officials (AASHTO). Frequencies from the Forestry Radio Service are coordinated through the Forestry Conservation Communications Association, and Fire, Emergency Medical Services (EMS), and Special Emergency Frequencies through the International Municipal Signal Association/International Association of Fire Chiefs (IMSA). The goal of the State coordinator is to forward a completed application with a selected frequency in approximately 4 to 12 working days (depending on type of services). An applicant may expect to receive their radio station license within approximately 4 to 6 months after the filing date at the FCC. Since Georgia is bordered by 5 other states, coordination must be accomplished with those states to lessen the mutual interference between all users within 75 miles of state borders.

The purpose of the radio frequency coordination process is to ensure that state and local public safety agencies can communicate over a frequency that is relatively free of harmful interference. This aspect of providing a clear radio transmission has a direct life and death impact at all levels of government. This coordination function is performed by GTA for all levels of government, from cities up to State agencies throughout the State. Due to the continuous changing of elected officials at the local levels and their budgetary constraints, the consolidation of the coordination process in an agency provides the continuity and technical expertise that could not be found at any other level of government. The centralization of this function meets the requirements of the FCC, while promoting economy and efficiency of State and local radio communications operations, and ensures that State requirements receive the proper priority and emphasis.

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The State frequency coordinator manages and administers the renewals and modifications of all radio station licenses for State agencies. This includes the planning, engineering and licensing of statewide systems for the Departments of Public Safety, Transportation, Corrections, and the Georgia Forestry Commission, among others. This results in centralized management of radio station licenses for all state departments and agencies. Licenses are maintained in database and hard copy files. Licenses are renewed, updated and modified as necessary. Current licenses are distributed to departments and agencies for posting at transmitter locations as required by FCC rules and regulations.

The State frequency coordinator is also the liaison to federal agencies. To ensure radio systems are compliant with applicable FCC, FAA and other federal government policies, procedures, rules and regulations. Inclusion of all LMR (Land Mobile Radio) licensed facilities in the FCC ULS (Universal Licensing System) and registration of Tax Identification Numbers (TIN). To ensure compliance with FAA navigational, obstruction, and clearance requirements and procedures for antenna and communications structures. Registration of antenna structures in accordance with FCC regulations and provide guidance on posting of ASR numbers at tower locations. Coordinate with Department of Agriculture, US Fish and Wildlife Services, and other federal agencies, for shared land use agreements for communications towers and transmitter stations on other than state owned properties.

The State frequency coordinator manages the allocation and assignment of 821 MHz frequencies on behalf of the Chairman and Regional Review Committee, Region 10 Georgia, National Public Safety and Special Emergency Communications Plan. On January 24, 2002, the State frequency coordinator was elected Chairperson of the newly organized Region 10 – Georgia, 700 MHz Regional Planning Committee. Committee and sub-committee meetings will be scheduled in the near future. There will be 24 MHz of spectrum allocated to public safety use in 700 MHz.

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